

Spark Gap

Volume 22, Issue 2, February 2005

From the President...

Ernest Clark, KB9SKI, President, Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

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KB9SKI,
President

*The Official
Newsletter of
the Mid-State
Amateur Radio
Club*

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Radio Club
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Folks:

A couple of topics for this month. First, our annual Technician license class has been scheduled. It'll start at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 19, 2005, at the Greenwood Public Library. This is somewhat of a change from previous years -- but

maybe we'll ready a whole new set of potential hams who can find weekend time but not week-night time for a class. Talk up the class and see whether any of your non-ham relations, friends, or their relations might be interested.

Look around at the next club meeting and ask how many people in the room got started because of our class -- and then ask whether we'd have the club at all if there hadn't been an annual class for decades. MARC (and amateur radio as a whole) continues one license at a time. Talk up this year's class.

Second topic: repeater improvements and the need for progress. Matt, Jay, and I have been discussing what needs to be done, and in what order. One

significant problem has been the fact that between the three of us, we hold, I believe, five paying jobs. We've only so much volunteer time available. Another problem is the fact that with technical improvements, buying cheap frequently means buying twice -- once to buy something, then again to buy the right stuff when the first batch isn't up to fixing the problem. complicating the picture, consider that the repeater signal is going through chain of a dozen antennas, cables, connectors, amplifiers, etc. We can spend incredible amounts

of money improving the system to no effect -- if among those dozen components the weak link is the one that we don't upgrade. All this could be a recipe for total stagnation -- but there are now three shoulders pushing the cart. We're spec'ing componets and arguing over the merits of various brands. Once we reach consensus,

parts will be on order and weak links should get stronger. Thanks for complaining at the January meeting, folks; perhaps we've been in a two-and-a-half-shoulder patch of mud lately. 73, KB9SKI ■

***Tech class
begins March
19th, 2005***

Eric Halvorson, WISH Reporter, Guest Speaker at February 19th Meeting

Veteran WISH TV new anchor, Eric Halvorson, spent a week traveling to Sri Lanka to report on humanitarian efforts for tsunami victims. Eric and news photographer Kevin Connors had an exclusive look at how the World Food Program continues to aid and feed tsunami disaster victims. Two former Hoosiers head up the Rome organization. As a major player in the UH relief effort in the Indian Ocean region, WFP is appealing to governments for US\$256 million to feed one-and-a-half million people. Eric got a first hand view of the critical need for food and supplies.

What may sound like a dream trip quickly became a nightmare for the

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ARRL Board Members Meet on January 21-22, 2005

...from the ARRL Website, January 2005

NEWINGTON, CT, Jan 27, 2005—Frigid New England temperatures and a major snowstorm failed to chill enthusiasm as the ARRL Board of Directors met January 21-22 in Windsor, Connecticut, to tackle a lengthy agenda. ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, chaired the gathering. Among the highlights of the session was the Board's unanimous adoption of positions on six initiatives for the 109th Congress.

Topping the list was a call for "consistent application" of the FCC's limited federal preemption policy—PRB-1—to Amateur Radio antenna systems. The League wants PRB-1 to apply to "all types of land use regulations," public and private. That would include deed covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs).

"The American Radio Relay League seeks congressional instruction to the FCC to extend its limited preemption policy governing residential Amateur Radio antennas, so that private land-use authorities cannot preclude, but must reasonably accommodate, Amateur Radio communications in subdivisions and communities," the Board resolved. After the FCC declined to include CC&Rs under the PRB-1 umbrella, the League since 2002 has initiated bills in Congress to accomplish the same end. "The Amateur Radio Emergency Communications Consistency Act of 2004," introduced in the 108th Congress and designated [HR 1478](#), attracted 36 cosponsors.

In addition, the Board expressed support for measures to improve federal management

of telecommunications, including beefing up the FCC's ability to regulate transmitter, receiver and antenna issues and resolve electromagnetic interference. The Board also wants public service allocations, including Amateur Radio's, exempted from auction or commercial reallocation, and compensatory spectrum whenever the federal government reallocates existing public service spectrum to another service. The resolution reflected the essence of the "Amateur Radio Spectrum Protection Act of 2004," HR 713, which attracted 108 cosponsors in the last Congress. An identical bill will be introduced into the 109th Congress, the Board was told.

Calling amateur frequencies "the technological equivalent of a national park," the Board further resolved to support measures to "preserve and protect" primary

Amateur Radio access to existing amateur spectrum "as a natural resource for the enjoyment of all properly licensed individuals, and protect against interference from unlicensed transmitters such as Part 15 devices" operating on amateur frequencies. That would include such technologies as broadband

over power line, or BPL, which operates under Part 15 rules.

Finally, the Board expressed support for requiring the FCC to develop effective, mandatory standards for radio frequency susceptibility of consumer electronic devices. It also expressed opposition to any expansion of current prohibitions against the reception of radio signals beyond those already on the books. Excepted from the resolution were FCC efforts to strengthen or clarify prohibitions regarding cell phone and personal communication services.

...From the ARRL Website, January 27, 2005 ■



Incoming ARRL Chief Operating Officer Harold Kramer, WJ1B (center right) and Chief Development Officer Mary Hobart, K1MMH, at the ARRL Board of Directors meeting.

Officers

President:
Ernest Clark,
KB9SKI

Vice President:
Dave Daily,
KB9LOT

Secretary:
Linda
Harshbarger,
KC9GCH

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KC9EBL

Repeater Trustee:
Matt Payne,
KB9JUE

Spark Gap Editor:
Bob LaGrange,
N9SIU

FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell Resigns

...from the ARRL Newsline, January 2005

FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell announced today that he'll step down, effective "sometime in March". Powell's resignation comes just one day after President George W. Bush's inauguration for a second term in the White House. Nominated by former President Bill Clinton, Powell--whose father is Secretary of State Colin Powell--joined the FCC in 1997. He became its chairman two days after President Bush was sworn in for his first term in 2001. ARRL CEO David Sumner, K1ZZ, called Powell's performance "a deep disappointment" after some initial optimism. While the League is not unhappy about Powell's departure--especially given his unabashed cheerleading on behalf of the FCC's broadband over power line (BPL) initiative--there's also concern about whom President Bush might call upon to replace him.

"It's no secret that we thought Chairman Powell was going entirely in the wrong direction on BPL and dragging the other commissioners and FCC staff along--willing or not--because he was, after all, the chairman," Sumner said. "A new chairman might be a chance for a fresh start."

Last October when the FCC adopted new Part 15 rules for BPL, Powell called it "a banner day". While conceding that BPL will affect some spectrum users, including "all those wonderful Amateur Radio operators out there", the chairman implied that the FCC must balance the benefits of BPL against the relative value of other licensed services.

Powell listed the Commission's adoption of BPL rules among the "policy highlights" of his tenure. "Broadband to power plugs would lower prices, expand deployment," the chairman's list of accomplishments asserts.

Possibilities to replace Powell include the other Republican members of the five-member FCC--Kathleen Q. Abernathy, a staunch BPL supporter, and Kevin J. Martin. Speculation also has been raised about various

candidates outside the commissioners. "We look forward to the opportunity to work with the new chairman, whoever that may be," Sumner said.

Powell, in his announcement, said it was "with a mixture of pride and regret" that he informed the president of his decision to step down. "Having completed a bold and aggressive agenda, it is time for me to pursue other opportunities and let someone else take the reins of the agency," he said. "During my tenure, we worked to get the law right in order to stimulate innovative technology that puts more power in the hands of the American people, giving them greater choices that enrich their lives." The chairman said the seeds of the Commission's policies under his leadership "are taking firm root in the marketplace and are starting to blossom". He cited the increased use of cell phones, digital TV and other digital technology "increasingly connected anytime, anywhere by a wide variety of broadband networks".

"Our children will inherit this exciting future," Powell proclaimed, adding that he looks forward to spending some time with his wife and two sons "before taking up my next challenge".

As FCC chairman, Powell also has been in the forefront of enforcing the Commission's rules on indecency, largely through imposing huge fines on violators. He also supported changes in media ownership rules that permitted even greater concentration in the ownership of broadcasting outlets.

Powell's formal resignation announcement followed widespread reports in the media that he would be leaving. Communications Daily said the chairman's last day would be March 10.

Tech Class Info

Class Dates

March 19

March 26

April 2

April 9

April 16

April 23

April 30

May 7

May 14

Class Time
2 to 4:30 p.m.

Location
**Greenwood
Public Library**

Weather Spotter Class Set for March 30, 2005

Linda Harshbarger, KC9GCH, Secretary, Mid-State Amateur Radio Club



View of
KC9GCH's back
patio after a recent
snowfall.

Fellow Amateurs:

It's been a snowy January and even though snow is still on the ground it's time to look toward Spring. Weather Spotter classes are being scheduled with the first class to convene on March 4th in Bloomington, Indiana. Our meeting location in Franklin will have a class on March 30th beginning at 7:00 p.m. If you can't make the class or have Amateur radio friends elsewhere who wish to attend a class, a complete listing of all currently scheduled classes may be found at <http://www.w9nws.org/training.htm>.

A quick check of the National Weather Service database for Johnson County reveals that between 1950 and 2003, Johnson County experienced 13 tornados including four F3 magnitude tornados. Weather spotter training is provided free under a program called SKYWARN with a request that severe weather is reported back to the National Weather Service. I encourage all MARC club members and Amateurs to attend an annual class. It's good to know what to do when severe weather strikes but it's especially good to be able to report severe weather in the interest of public safety.

The following information is available on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website (NOAA) and provides some background into severe weather. <http://erh.noaa.gov/lwx/swep/Spotting.html>.

Color: A very dark (black) thunderstorm or one taking an eerie look (brownish, green, or yellow cloud colors) may be an indication of a severe thunderstorm. The colors and darkness of the cloud are caused by the storm's massive size and the blockage of sunlight. This storm may bring hail, very heavy rain, and damaging winds. Take protective action immediately.

Sound: The sound of a freight train is the roar of wind as it moves through trees and buildings. It may indicate an approaching tornado or severe downburst. The rapid rotation of winds in a tornado also sometimes make a high pitch whistling or whirling noise. In any of these cases, you should take protective action immediately.

Rotating Wall Cloud: This is a lowering of clouds from the rain-free cloud base (updraft region) of the storm. It is circular in shape and can be seen slowly rotating. Sometimes a tail forms from the wall cloud toward the rain area of the storm. This is a sign of a tornadic thunderstorm. If a tornado is to form it will generally descend from the storm near or within the wall cloud. Take cover immediately if this is approaching you. Otherwise, contact the National Weather Service with your sighting.

With Spotter classes just around the corner it brings hope that Spring isn't too far behind. Hope to see all of you in class. 73, KC9GCH

Buy, Sell or Trade

Here's your opportunity as a member of MARC to buy, sell or trade amateur radio equipment. We will place your ad in the next newsletter if received by the end of the month. Send items to Bob, N9SIU or Linda, KB9GCH.

For Sale or Trade: Kenwood TM-G707A 146M/440M mobile radio "new in the box" for \$250. Contact Tom KB9RBB at 317-835-7816

For Trade: Military Generator 5KW make offer. Contact Tom KB9RBB at 317-835-7816

Repeater Update 2/2005

I would like to take this opportunity to update our membership on the status of the club repeater, and address several complaints I heard were expressed at the meeting last month.

Our repeater continues to run well. Jay Chrisman, our technical expert, is making plans to attach another duplexer to our machine, which hopefully will allow us to turn the amp back on. The amplifier will help increase reception within the repeater's "footprint", but it's not realistic to expect much of an increased range, due to VHF's strong tendency to be "line of sight". The amp will be a good step, though.

Once the amp goes online, I'll ask the technical committee to start working on the link project. The goal of having 4-6 links around the county is an ambitious one. It is also a long term goal. The process of building even one link is a process with many steps; and like any project, it must be undertaken one step at a time. I know that some of the club members are upset with the length of time that this project has taken to get underway, and I understand these frustrations. But this is not as simple as putting an antenna on someone's house, wiring two radios, and calling the project done.

To date, completion of the link project has rested on the shoulders of two people. Jerry Schantz, who has funded almost everything we have acquired out of his own pocket, and Jay Chrisman, who has done most of the work so far. Club members have also come together to have two garage sales, with proceeds going to the repeater fund. These funds are earmarked for repeater use,

but have yet to be used. But those funds will be needed once the link project proceeds, so please don't think that the efforts of these members have been wasted. We'll need funds for links, coax (a major expense), connectors, and maintenance. Don't forget that a link is every bit as complicated and prone to breakage as the actual repeater, because links are repeaters in their own right. Each will need maintenance, upkeep, and periodic servicing.

I would like to encourage all of those members who are frustrated to e-mail me or contact me and let me hear your concerns directly, so that I can address them. I would also ask those that are outspoken to consider volunteering for the technical committee. What was once one of our most active committees is now resting largely on the shoulders of its very capable (but still only human) chairman. I'm sure Jay would appreciate any volunteers who are willing to actively participate in the management and administration of our club's technical resources. To those who would chastise without first offering to help, I can only offer the wit and wisdom of Ben Franklin, someone who was all too familiar with both the power of electricity and the nature of politics: "Well done is better than well said."

As always, criticisms, comments, or suggestions are appreciated.

Respectfully submitted, Matthew Payne, Repeater Trustee

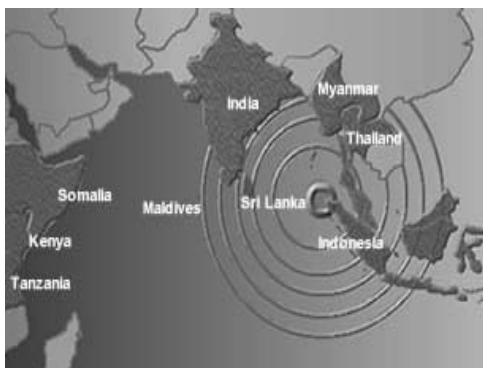
**Matthew Payne,
Repeater Trustee**

**WA9RDF
Repeater
146.835/146.235
MHz
151.4 Hz PL**

(Continued from page 1)

WISH TV crew. Eric will have video and his personal story of their Amazing Race to get the story and return the story to Indiana viewers. 73, W8ISH

Bring A Friend! This is an excellent opportunity to introduce a friend to amateur radio and our club. Call up a former member or someone new and invite them to be your guest at this meeting. This is a program you won't want to miss.



Map of Indian Ocean area impacted by the tsunami.

2005 Schedule of Events

February

- 3 Thursday Night Supper Club**
The Country Charm Grill; 39 Public Square on State Road 9 in Shelbyville
- 5 Mini-Marathon Pre-Race**
Indianapolis; <http://www.indyhams.org/N9FEB@comcast.net>
- 10 Thursday Night Supper Club**
Jonathan Byrd's Cafeteria; I-65 South and Main Street in Greenwood
- 17 Thursday Night Supper Club**
The Home Town Buffet; US 31 (East Street) North of I-465 in Southern Plaza, Indianapolis
- 19 Southern Indiana Wind Talkers Birdseye HamFest**
Birdseye Masonic Lodge, Birdseye, IN; <http://www.geocities.com/birdseyehamfest>
- 19 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
- 24 Thursday Night Supper Club**
Chili's; US 31 South in the Greenwood Park Mall Parking Lot
- 26 Cabin Fever Hamfest - LaPort Amateur Radio Club**
LaPorte, Indiana; <http://www.k9jsi.org>

MARCH

- 3 Thursday Night Supper Club**
Fazoli's; SR 135 north of Main Street across from Meijers in Greenwood
- 5 Mini-Marathon Pre-Race**
Indianapolis; <http://www.indyhams.org/N9FEB@comcast.net>
- 12 2005 WVARA Tailgate Party**
Northside Bingo Hall, Terre Haute, IN; www.w9uuu.org/tailgate.html
- 19 MARC Meeting**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN
- 19 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library 2 to 4:30 p.m., Greenwood, IN
- 26 Michigan City Hamfest**
Michigan City Diamond Cove, Michigan City, IN; www.w9ly.org
- 26 Technician Class**
Greenwood Public Library 2 to 4:30 p.m., Greenwood, IN
- 30 National Weather Service Weather Spotter Class**
Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, IN



Mid-State Amateur
Radio Club
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www.midstatehams.org
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Spark Gap

Mid-State Amateur Radio Club

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month in the basement of the Johnson County Emergency Management Agency, 1111 Hospital Road, Franklin, Indiana 46131

See our website, www.midstatehams.org, for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Thursday Night Supper Club

The MARC Thursday Group is an informal group of amateur radio enthusiasts who meet almost every Thursday Night at various restaurants around the Johnson County and Southern Marion County areas. This is a great opportunity to get out and meet fellow amateur radio operators in an informal setting. The location of the restaurant varies weekly, so they may be near you soon! The group meets each week at 6:00 PM. See you there!